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The Shape of Things

THE SUSPENSION OF THE CONVERSION OF sterling has highlighted the frantic hunger for dollars which characterizes post-war trading relations. When the British loan agreement was made, it was assumed that free convertibility could safely be undertaken at this stage because the sterling balances in the hands of Britain's creditors were bound to be small. The rapidity with which Britain was forced to draw on the loan to meet current living requirements and the world-wide shortage of dollars led, however, to a run on Britain's dollar balances not unlike the run on a bank. And like a bank Britain was unable to meet all demands at one time. Suspension of convertibility, like the 1933 bank holiday, relieves the immediate pressure but leaves the problem unsolved. By increasing domestic food production and instituting various new belt-tightening devices Britain still hopes to stabilize its balance of payments without begging for an additional American loan. Modification of the anti-discrimination clause in the British loan would be of more lasting value toward this end than the suspension of convertibility. Far more fundamental would be tariff concessions which would enable American business men to purchase additional supplies from Britain and the sterling areas. Unless we are prepared to buy where we sell, we may soon find the markets of the world closed to our products.

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THE SUCCESS OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, after many setbacks, in drawing up a draft charter for the International Trade Organization is a hopeful step toward the creation of more stable conditions for world trade. No one should be deceived into thinking, however, that the compromise document worked out at Geneva provides an assured basis for world recovery. The preamble pays lip service to the principles which all agree must serve as the foundation for such a revival. It calls upon all countries to maintain "full and productive employment" at home, to permit the free spread of technology, to undertake a reduction of tariffs and preferences, and to eliminate such indefensible practices as export subsidies and quantitative restrictions on imports. But loopholes in the text rob these statements of any immediate significance. Existing preferential systems, for example, are to be allowed to remain, and all the protective devices are permitted during periods of emergency and during the present transitional period. A comparison of the new charter with the original proposals drafted in Washington in 1945 shows retrogression on a number of important points. While the establishment of a permanent trade organization to consider from an international rather than a national point of view the problems that arise in meeting balances of payments holds much promise, no solution of the fundamental problems is yet in sight. The unwillingness of the Republican-controlled Congress to permit significant tariff concessions by the United States means that the world's "dollar famine" is certain to continue. And until a permanent method of relieving the scarcity of dollars is devised, no real liberalization of trade relations is possible.

*

PERHAPS WE SHOULD NOT COMPLAIN OF tactical blunders that make Republican success at the polls more problematical by the week. Yet there are limits beyond which even a hell-bent G. O. P. should not be allowed to go without challenge. A case in point is the bodily assault by counsel for a House subcommittee on the person of Joseph Padway, attorney for the American Federation of Labor, in the course of a Congressional hearing. When Irving McCann, taking exception to Mr. Padway's suggestion of "Gestapo tactics," grabbed the A. F. of L. man by the throat and threw him to the floor, one would have expected a shocked chairman to suspend the hearings at once and the counsel soon thereafter. Far from doing either, Representative Kearns merely pointed out that the committee's counsel was "under a great strain" and suggested that the hearing "proceed on a normal basis." What seemed normal to Mr. McCann, and evidently to Chairman Kearns as well, evoked "an astonished gasp from the audience," according to the correspondent of the New York *Times*. Requested by another Federation official to disqualify himself from further part in the hearing on the ground of prejudice, McCann sneered at his challenger as "a man who five years ago was a letter-carrier pretending to tell a Congressional committee how to run its affairs—a man with more brains in his feet than he has in his head." From a purely partisan point of view nothing could be more delightful than to see the Republicans outrage one group

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after another in this suicidal fashion—they are preparing next to alienate the farmers by an "investigation" of the cooperative movement, through which half the farmers of the country, most of them Republican, buy and sell in varying degree. But the partisan view is far too narrow. Coming so soon after the Brewster circus, the performance before the Kearns subcommittee emphasizes the dangerous extent to which the Republicans have degraded the whole process of legislative inquiry. This is contempt of Congress compared to which subpoena-dodging is reverence itself.

*

THE WAY OF THE COOPERATOR IS HARD IN these days of reaction. The Greenbelt Consumer Services has been adjudged a monopoly by a subcommittee of the House Small Business Committee, and a recommendation has gone to the full committee that the cooperative's contract with the FPHA be canceled. Some slight skulduggery behind this decision is suggested by the committee's advance release that it was "reliably informed" that "less than 2,000 of the 8,000 population in Greenbelt favor the cooperative movement" and that it was going to question "the advisability of locking up a whole community by act of the federal government." Inquiry might have brought out the fact that 4,500 of the 8,000 residents of Greenbelt are children and that more than two-thirds of the 1,850 families are members of the cooperative. True, the cooperative in Greenbelt Center operates under a lease clause which is common to many shopping centers in all parts of the country. The clause states that no competing business shall operate in the same shopping center. But this restriction does not apply in North Greenbelt, where most of Greenbelt's residents have their homes. The reason why no commercial venture has started up there seems to be, oddly enough, that the people are solidly sold on cooperation. A liquor store tried, but the community vote against it was 1,106 to 309. Greenbelters have cooperative services in the shape of two food stores, a drugstore, a variety store, a movie theater, a garage, a bus line, a traveling store, a laundry and dry-cleaning establishment, a tobacco and candy store, a barber shop, and a beauty parlor. Before reaching a final decision the House Committee on Small Business might do well to consult the findings of its predecessor in 1946, which concluded that "the cooperative movement operates as a very successful means of combating monopolistic concentrations."

With Sikh-Moslem fighting in the Punjab casting a pall over India in its first week of independence, we have asked Shiva Rao, our New Delhi correspondent, to cable us a full report of recent developments. It will appear in next week's issue.

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EVEN IF WE WERE FOLLOWERS OF THE *nil nisi bonum* school of obituary writers—and we are not—we would be hard put to find a kinder word for Theodore G. Bilbo than the classic observation that he was not always as bad as he was sometimes. All that prevented the Mississippi Senator from becoming a national menace rather than a national nuisance was a personal corruption so flagrant that the Senate of his own state once pronounced him unfit "to sit with honest, upright men." A self-seeking opportunist of the most cynical variety, Bilbo was not even loyal to the degenerate code that he proclaimed. As rabidly anti-Catholic as any other member of the Ku Klux Klan—and he proudly flaunted his membership—he nevertheless campaigned for Al Smith in 1928 in the hope of political preference. So, too, he voted with the Administration in the early days of the New Deal, although the whole Roosevelt program must have been poison to a man who could seriously propose deporting every American Negro to Africa, who could address citizens by mail as "Dear Dago" and "Dear Kike," and who could call on "every red-blooded American" to get out on the night before election and "see that no nigger votes." With the Senate rid of Bilbo the country may at least hope that Mississippi will not give his seat to a demagogue far shrewder, less vulnerable, and quite as dangerous. We *do* mean John Rankin.

Pick Up the Pieces

UNDOUBTEDLY the most intelligent provision of the Taft-Hartley labor law is the clause establishing a Congressional committee to watch the law in operation and see if it works. Logically a committee should have been appointed to study the problem before any measure was passed, but such are the promptings of politics that the incoming Republicans thought it better to legislate in haste and correct at leisure. As a result they will find themselves, we predict, in a race with the country and the courts to make changes in a law which is in part unenforceable, in part ambiguous, and in part, we believe, unconstitutional. With the statute hardly dry on the books, both labor and management have already driven tanks through its loopholes, and union officials, itching for a test, have accorded some of its provisions the kind of reverence that was generally paid to the Volstead Act in the rambunctious twenties.

To the chagrin of Representative Hartley, at least, it is industry itself—coal and automobiles—that has set the pattern for the "avoidance" (not to be confused with "evasion," says the conservative commentator, David Lawrence) of the provision making unions liable to suit for breach of contract. Avoidance may be achieved simply by omitting the usual pledge not to strike during the life of an agreement, or by a clause like the one Lewis introduced providing that his miners would work only when "willing and able," or by explicit waivers of the right to bring suit. The International Typographical Union plans to avoid suits for breach of contract by dispensing with contracts altogether, relying instead on posted memoranda stipulating "conditions of employment." What the authors of the law failed to take into account was the inevitability of counter-suits by unions, since the grievance that brings on a strike may be a breach of contract as surely as the strike itself. The plain fact is that to many employers "the law's delay" is as unattractive a prospect as it is to the unions, and a blight on production while it lasts. Hartley will have to build camps in the capital if he carries out his threat to "bring management as well as labor to Washington" whenever a contract "violates the spirit" of the new law.

The ban on union expenditures for political purposes is already violated in more than spirit; it is loudly and publicly flouted, with Congress urgently invited to witness the process. The C. I. O. has expended funds to publish a "1947 Voting Guide," intended to advise its members on how to defeat Congressmen who "voted against the people." The A. F. of L. has promoted a similar project, and in Connecticut it recently paid for advertisements in the Hartford papers calling on the state's Republicans to blight the Presidential hopes of Senator Taft. The official C. I. O. paper is engaged in a campaign to put across a pro-labor candidate in a special Congressional election in Maryland, and both major trade-union bodies are working for Philip Storch, president of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, Newspaper Guild, who is running as the Democratic candidate for the seat left vacant by the death of Representative Gerlach. So far the Justice Department is merely "studying" these violations, and the strongest word from Capitol Hill is "impudent."

Innumerable ambiguities in the act have already cropped up, with court tests to come on a dozen technicalities, such as whether or not the data required of unions are to be made public or remain confidential, and whether the check-off is to be limited strictly to dues or include assessments. But probably the provision most likely to come under Supreme Court scrutiny, unless it is scrapped first, is the anti-Communist section. The interpretation of Robert Denham, general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, is that no union may enjoy the services of the board, which means that it cannot qualify in an election for a bargaining agent, if a single officer of the local, the international, or the parent body fails to sign an affidavit to the effect that he has no connection with the Communists. None of the top leaders of the C. I. O. will touch the affidavit, the anti-Communists on principle and the others for obvious reasons. Similarly John L. Lewis, on the execu-

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tive board of the A. F. of L., scorns this device as much as he scorns the comrades. So if Mr. Denham persists in his strict interpretation, the 13,000,000 members of the two major labor bodies will have to dispense with the board altogether. Members of the Congressional "watchdog" committee have already expressed the view that this is too much of a good thing, but we hope Mr. Denham sticks to his point. Some labor legislation was needed, but the Taft-Hartley law was demagoguery from the start, and the sooner it explodes the sooner a sober effort can be made. If political casualties attend the process, we shall know how to control our grief.

Vetoes and Other Tools

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

THERE are more ways than one to skin a cat—or to knife the United Nations. Russia does the job with the veto, a clumsy, dull tool but the only one Gromyko seems to be able to lay his hand on. We use all sorts of methods and instruments. In the Indonesian affair we did it by intervening, directly and unilaterally, with an offer of mediation while the Security Council was considering various possibilities of international action, including a proposal to create a three- or five-nation commission to arbitrate the differences between the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic. When the Indonesians suggested that they would accept our offer provided it would not prejudice the chance of arbitration, we pulled them up short. They could take it or leave it, we told them; if any conditions were attached, the deal was off. On these terms the Indonesians properly declined; we withdrew the offer.

Then Mr. Van Kleffens announced for the fourth or fifth time that he could not accept U. N. arbitration because the Indonesian dispute was a purely domestic matter and such action would infringe Dutch sovereignty. He did not bother to explain why the Security Council's cease-fire order had not infringed Dutch sovereignty or why American mediation would not do so; the astute Netherlands delegate is less interested in logic than in keeping an international commission out of Holland's colonial preserve. For their own obvious and similar reasons the French and British Council members sympathize with his reluctance and have steadfastly backed him in the Council. But why should the United States not only adopt the same position as the three colonial powers but even carry the ball for them? Why? In order to counter Russia's strong insistence on U. N. intervention? Or to keep Russia out of the negotiations for a settlement? Or just to show solidarity with our cherished Western allies?

Whatever our reasons, the result of our maneuver has been to weaken and hamstring the U. N. and to put the United States firmly on record as defending the "sovereignty" of a colonial power against the threat of collective action.

The question whether a veto is a wickeder weapon than a by-pass will interest hardly anyone.

THE Russians on their side had a good chance last week to accept a reasonable compromise and passed it up. Gromyko vetoed the Australian proposal on the Balkan border dispute with the same abrupt decision he used later in vetoing the extreme and provocative American resolution. The plan put forward by Australia carefully refrained from distributing blame. It took account of the "threat to peace" on the Greek frontier and called upon all four of the states involved to enter into negotiations to end their differences.

If Russia had accepted this proposal, it would have cut a lot of ground from under the crowd in Washington that are already preparing to send American troops over to Greece to help use up the twelve shiploads of guns and things that went this week. But Russia's story is that no help of any sort is going to the guerrillas from the Balkan states and that any form of international intervention is therefore unnecessary and an infringement of the sovereignty of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. So Gromyko must vote no even on a decently impartial resolution.

THE new Greek government, still brewing as we go to press, may turn out to be a first small gesture toward placating American opinion in anticipation of larger favors still to come from this side. It would be hard, I suspect, to stir up much public enthusiasm over here for sending American troops to the rescue of the sort of Greek government that has just resigned. Mr. Poulos may well be justified in believing, as he reports on a later page, that the Truman Administration is deliberately angling for a showdown with Russia in Greece. But a sensible preparation for a policy so packed with danger at best would be a government shake-up in Athens which would dislodge at least the most flamboyant grafters and gangsters now in power.

The job of organizing a new Cabinet has been intrusted to Constantin Tsaldaris, Foreign Minister in the late Maximos government and its actual boss, who has just returned to Athens from secret policy conferences in Washington and London. It may be assumed that he took home with him a mild suggestion that a clean-up was due. But if Mr. Tsaldaris heads the next government, one may be sure that any changes made will be calculated with a nice eye for political necessity, and nothing else. So far the honest and experienced leader of the Liberal Party, Themistocles Sophoulis, has refused to come into a government he does not head; he knows all too well that he would be used as camouflage to deceive the untrained American eye.

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IF ALL issues were issues of principle; the Soviet vetoes in the Security Council would merit all the excitement they have stirred up. But a fair-minded observer is bound to admit that the line-up is more often one of interest than of principle; it is a power line-up—four to one. Look over last week's votes on the admission of new members. It is an illuminating fact that the only two states elected, Yemen and Pakistan, are states at present outside the opposing big-power "teams"—in spite of Pakistan's dominion status.

In the division Britain and the United States inevitably voted against Albania and Outer Mongolia—both under direct Russian influence. Also inevitably, Russia voted against Transjordan, Eire, and Portugal. Its reasons were essentially the same, although less apparent at first glance. Transjordan, though in form an Arab state and a member of the Arab League, in fact is a British creation and puppet. Eire's pro-Axis "neutrality" in the war absolves it from the charge of dependency on Britain or the United States, but its government is Catholic reactionary, and in any contest with Russia it is sure to vote with the other Western powers. Portugal, of course, is intimately tied to Franco Spain and is bound to Britain by the oldest treaty of alliance in existence.

Pakistan's election was certain since India as a whole was already a member. But Yemen! The unanimous election of Yemen is the final ironic comment on the motives that determine votes. Yemen is a state sunk in pre-medieval ignorance and ruled by an absolute monarch who makes no pretense of allowing any political rights to any of his subjects. In Yemen Jews are treated more brutally than in any land on earth, not excepting Palestine; yet they are forbidden to leave the country on pain of death. But never mind, Yemen has the one essential qualification for membership: it is not in either big-power sphere of influence—not yet.

Dollars or Socialism

BY BLAIR BOLLES

Washington, August 22

IN THE Anglo-American talks on the United Kingdom's dollar crisis which opened here this week the issue is the future of socialism as well as the future of Britain. Secretary of the Treasury Snyder, the chief American negotiator, has implied that much of the $3,750,000,000 which America lent Britain in July, 1946, has been frittered away as a result of the economic experiments of the Labor government.

The hostility toward socialism shown by the United States representatives in these talks and in the concurrent talks on the Ruhr reveals a dangerous confusion in this country's thinking about the use of the dollar in foreign affairs. Snyder and his friends regard the dollar simply as a monetary unit to be invested for the purpose of making more dollars. The State Department, on the other hand, regards the dollar as a major political instrument of our foreign policy, to be used for the strengthening of an ally in the long contest with the Soviet Union.

The first effect of Snyderism would be to deprive the United States of British aid in its attempt to stop the spread of communism and of Russian influence. Two years ago British voters put the Labor government in office in the expectation that it would institute socialist planning. The surest method for driving British socialists, and socialists in other countries, to tolerate Communists is to insist that the socialists accept capitalism. Snyder's preoccupation with finance hides from him the whole phalanx of considerations that guide people in their political choices.

Snyder is not alone in his myopia. Ambassador Robert Murphy in Berlin has rebuffed those who advocate the nationalization of the Ruhr coal fields, which under private management and ownership contributed to the growth of Hitler's totalitarian state. Ambassador James Clement Dunn has tried to keep the Italian government free from socialist influences. In apparent agreement with Snyder that government controls delay recovery, Ambassador Jefferson Caffery in Paris a few days ago criticized the French, whose government applies economic controls, on the ground that they were not advancing their own recovery. As a result of these misguided pressures, Europe's Socialist parties are dividing like starfish. Washington makes it easy for Moscow.

In the face of the Treasury attitude, Sir Wilfrid Eady could not expect immediate substantial assistance when he arrived in Washington. The essentials of the problem could be simply stated. Britain had already drawn on the $3,750,000,000 in such large amounts that it would be exhausted by October, 1947, instead of lasting until 1950 as the United States had expected. Britain requires dollars to live. Almost a third of its imports—articles of first importance, including food—come from the United States. And it is one-way traffic. The United States in 1946 sold to Britain goods valued at £226,900,000 and bought from Britain goods valued at £35,400,000.

When Sir Wilfrid arrived in Washington, the amount of credit left to Britain had fallen to $850,000,000. While he was here, it went down another $150,000,000. The severity of the crisis was recognized well before July

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15 of this year, but on that day, in accordance with the terms of the loan agreement, London made its sterling indebtedness abroad convertible into dollars, and the situation became immediately worse.

The relief that the United States gave Britain after two days of discussion in Washington simply restored the situation existing before July 15. Washington agreed that London could halt conversion. Throughout the conversations Britain took the attitude that it was merely setting forth its position without asking the United States to make any further concessions, but it managed to indicate that it would like to keep the privilege of preferential trading within the British Commonwealth and also to buy when possible from countries which did not demand dollars, even if the price of the goods should be higher. Although Under Secretary of State Clayton was little disposed to grant such boons, the British had some reason to think they might receive them, along with a reduction in their share of the expenses of running the Anglo-American occupation zone in Germany.

Under present Administration plans any real assistance to Britain would come through the Marshall program for financial aid to all the Western European countries. A special loan to Britain apart from the Marshall program is politically impossible, in the opinion of the State Department. Congress would not grant it. And according to intimations from Snyder, further relaxation of the requirements of the existing credit agreement can be granted only by Congress. If Congress approves a great appropriation for European recovery, Britain may be secure. If Congress refuses to go to Europe's help, Britain's situation will become desperate.

To assure Congress that the Truman Administration is a hard-boiled lender and to allay his own doubts about the efficiency of socialism and government planning, Snyder called on Britain to justify its quick exhaustion of the credits. The superficial explanation is the gap between exports and imports. During the first six months of 1947 the United Kingdom bought goods valued at $1,600,000,000 more than those it sold; at that rate it would be $3,200,000,000 in the hole by the end of the year—almost the full amount of the American credit. The foreign-trade gap reflected British failure to produce goods for export in the quantity needed, and this production failure indicated some vital flaw in the national economy. The question before the negotiators in Washington was whether the British failure to produce up to its needs was the result of the Labor government's program or of conditions beyond the control of that or any other government.

In a plea for free enterprise echoing the sentiments of Secretary Snyder, Winston Churchill on August 23 put the onus for Britain's plight on Prime Minister Attlee and his Cabinet. Since this issue of the efficiency of socialist governments is sure to be emphasized when Congressional consideration of the Marshall program gets under way, the justice of the Churchill charges and the Snyder hints should be examined.

SOME light on the question can be obtained by an analysis of Britain's basic production problem, coal, for Attlee has nationalized the coal mines.

England does not produce enough coal to keep the factories of its great industries running at full production. Steel and textile plants are getting from 33 to 75 per cent of the coal they need. The government has set the modest figure of 200,000,000 tons as its output goal for the "coal year" ending next March, but the mines are not meeting their quotas. The coal that is mined, moreover, contains a higher percentage of impurities than pre-war coal, so that the actual usable output is considerably less than the official figure.

The picture is drab, but is socialism to blame? Some American officials are disturbed because last spring the mines went on a five-day week. That reflected not socialism but free enterprise. The National Union of Mine Workers, acting with the freedom of a union in a country where labor is not regimented, bargained for the short week and got it. With one day's cutting eliminated, weekly coal production has kept pace with what it was before, and in some weeks it has bettered the record of previous years. Absenteeism has declined: it went down to 8.59 per cent in May with a five-day week from 14.46 in April before the change.

Criticism of British coal-mining methods as inefficient was common in Washington before Attlee became Prime Minister. But in those days British backwardness was blamed instead of socialist fumbling. British mines, it was complained, were not mechanized. As a matter of fact, 72 per cent of British coal is cut mechanically, and 69 per cent is conveyed by mechanical means, while 82 per cent of our coal is cut merchanically, but English methods make possible the recovery of almost 100 per cent of the coal, as compared wth 80 per cent in the United States. British mechanization, however, leaves dirt, rock, and shale mixed with the coal that leaves the collieries. And new machinery for cleaning the coal is unobtainable because British steel production is not up to par. The problem of coal is rooted in conditions that long antedated Attlee.

American officials who think the economic salvation of other countries depends on free enterprise focus their attention on the need of an incentive for the operator. The British and other European governments focus their attention on the need of an incentive for the worker. "The condition of maximum production by the worker is determined by the environment in which he works, both physical and psychological," Sir Stafford Cripps, president of the British Board of Trade, told the House of Commons last March. "Without any mechani-

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cal change whatsoever in the present setup of our industries we could undoubtedly get a considerable increase in production if every worker were happy in and keen on his work." By trying to force Europe to shift its attention from concern for the worker to concern for the owner the United States might reduce, not raise, production.

The British government's errors in foreign affairs, serious as they may be, are not related to the steps it has taken toward establishing state control over economic life. One might even say that the British dollar crisis resulted from an absence of official control—in the United States. This country, in effect, has thrown away many of the dollars it lent to England by permitting American prices to rise without hindrance since England began to use its credit in July, 1946. If the United States had kept price control, Britain would have many more dollars at its command today.

The British problem now being studied by the Truman Administration has less to do with socialism than with a disastrous anachronism in international economic relations. Britain is on the verge of collapse not because it has no money but because it has not the right kind of money. The exchange used in foreign trading is essentially a bilateral mechanism; yet we live in a multilateral world. While Britain runs into debt to us, continental European countries are running into debt to Britain at the rate of about $40,000,000 a month. Until Britain, the United States, and the rest of the world are liberated from the cage of our antiquated exchange system, fiscal conferences can do no more than give temporary relief to any nation's economic ills.

Fish and Politics

BY RICHARD L. NEUBERGER

Wrangell, Alaska, August 15

EVERY schoolboy knows that Secretary of State Seward paid the Russian czar only $7,200,000 for all of Alaska, and that the Alaskan salmon pack yields seven times that sum every year. What the schoolboys don't know is that nearly all this money goes finally into wallets and bank accounts outside Alaska. This colonial exploitation is the cause of many of Alaska's troubles. British exploitation of the resources of the Straits Settlements or other colonies was less thorough and efficient than the looting of the Alaskan salmon industry by absentee interests.

When outsiders are relieving a country of its natural wealth, they usually give at least employment to the home folks. Alaskans do not even receive this benefit. More than half the men employed in catching and canning the salmon are non-residents. Of approximately $11,000,000 paid in wages in the salmon industry last year, only $3,729,000 went to Alaskans. When Philippine independence was celebrated in Seattle and Portland, few Filipinos were on hand for the occasion. Most of them were in Alaska canning Chinooks and Chums. They were living in barracks or on boats, and since they would not be paid their wages until they docked again in "the states," Alaska would not get even their chewing-gum and cigarette money, let alone any of the rest of their pay.

RICHARD L. NEUBERGER is an Oregon journalist who served in Alaska during the war. He has been revisiting the Territory this summer and is writing for The Nation *on various phases of Alaskan life.*

Alaska supplies 88 per cent of the American salmon pack and more than half of the world's output, but for the people living there it is almost as if the industry did not exist. Labor unions based in Seattle and packing companies with headquarters in Astoria and San Francisco have combined to keep the wealth created by it in the hands of people living outside the Territory. Bernard DeVoto, who has cited Anaconda Copper as the prime example of absentee exploitation in the United States, should cruise along the Alaskan coast. Butte miners are at least employed in the shafts of Skeleton Hill. In Alaska the unions, A. F. of L. or C. I. O., do not want to be troubled with the employment of Alaskans, particularly Alaskan Indians.

Half of all the salmon taken from Alaskan waters are snared in fish traps. These are huge wire cages sunk in the inlets and fiords through which the salmon must pass on their way to the rivers where they will spawn. The number that can be used is limited, since it pays to sink them only in places traversed by vast numbers of fish. Of 434 traps in Alaskan bays, only 38 belong to men who live in Alaska. More than half the traps belong to six large absentee companies. Two of these companies own 118 traps between them. Because very few men are employed in tending the traps Alaska's delegate in Congress, Edward L. Bartlett, has called them "an anti-social device."

One of the tragic shortcomings of the New Deal was its indifference to the absentee exploitation of Alaska. Although Harold Ickes as Secretary of the Interior was in charge of the Fish and Wildlife Service for more than a decade, he did nothing to return the salmon industry

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to Alaskans. Governor Gruening, an appointee of President Roosevelt, advocated a progressive tax on fish traps so that ownership of a large number might prove too costly, but with Ickes and Gruening at each other's throats, the suggestion never received the support of the Department of the Interior. For all his tirades against monopoly, Harold Ickes left office with monopoly more firmly intrenched in the canned-salmon industry than ever before. Gruening insisted that Alaskans should own the fish traps, but Ickes even forbade him to leave the Territory to press the question.

Politicians from the Pacific Coast states often engage in telephoned negotiations over fish traps. Senators from Washington and California can get trap licenses for influential constituents more easily than can Alaska's nonvoting delegate. The situation would be different if Alaska achieved statehood. It would then have control of its fisheries and could impose regulations limiting trap ownership to residents. This would enable the large native population of the Territory to participate for the first time in the trapping operations.

The canned-salmon industry led the local opposition to the statehood referendum: the packers fear that a genuine tax will be levied on their product if Alaska becomes a state. George Sundborg, manager of the Alaska Development Board, recently revealed that the salmon industry paid to the Territory only $887,000 in taxes during the last biennium on a fish pack worth more than $100,000,000. Moreover, the Territory levies no income tax on the wages of its carpetbaggers.

Warren Magnuson and Hugh Mitchell, state of Washington New Dealers, have pussyfooted on the issue of Alaskan statehood. So has Governor Wallgren, who said he could not indorse statehood because "some" people in Alaska seemed to be against it. However, practically all the witnesses at recent hearings of the House Committee on Public Lands favored statehood. One of the few opponents was an attorney who represents the salmon industry in Alaska.

Some opposition has come from conservationists who fear that the state of Alaska might not be as diligent as the federal government in protecting the fish runs. Yet under federal supervision the pack has been diminishing. In 1940 nearly 7,000,000 cases of salmon were canned in Alaska; last year the pack had dwindled to 3,871,000 cases. The fabulous pink-salmon runs of the southeastern "panhandle" are so reduced that the 1946 pack was only 1,454,000 cases as against 4,294,333 five years earlier. Higher prices have kept up the value of the pack.

Seton H. Thompson, chief of the Alaska branch of the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, frankly admits that "illegal fishing" is responsible for much of the diminution of the runs along Clarence Strait and Tongass Narrows. One game warden has been provided by a generous Congress to patrol 5,000 miles of Alaskan coastline. Only statehood, Alaskans are convinced, can restore to them the benefits of the salmon industry.

The entire world has a stake in the Alaskan salmon pack. Salmon has a greater nutritional value than almost any other food. An inspector in the Canadian Mounted Police told me he would rather eat a tin of Alaska King salmon while on patrol in 70-below-zero weather than a caribou steak or beef sirloin.

What's Our Game in Greece?

BY CONSTANTINE POULOS

Washington, August 22

NEXT month it will be three years since German troops started withdrawing from Greece, but the war is still going on in that little land and seems likely to go on for a long time.

There is only one logical, apparent reason why the Soviet Union is going so far out on a limb on the Greek question. The Russians are probably not prepared to risk *the* break with the United States over Greece. Their interest in Greece is not strategic. The Soviet Union will take its hands off Greece when the United States and Great Britain take their hands off Eastern Europe. That was the agreement, wasn't it?

All the while that the British were going into Greece, destroying the left movement and setting up extreme right-wing regimes, Moscow didn't say a word. Not until we started "interfering" in the internal affairs of countries in the sphere allocated to Russia did it start to needle Greece.

Possibly Moscow thinks the United States is only bluffing. If so, it is making a serious mistake. Washington will not back down on "the Greek thing." Both the State and the War Department want a showdown; indeed, would welcome it.

It is becoming clear now that the Truman Doctrine was not so extravagantly anti-Communist and anti-Russian simply for the purpose of getting the Greek-Turkish aid bill through Congress. It correctly reflected the mood and intent of high Administration officials.

There is the Middle East oil, too. But Greece is the

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perfect place, in every way, to stand up to the Russians, and Washington is determined to do so, even if—.

It is all rather sinister, and very dishonest on both sides.

The United States dishonestly wants to place all the blame for the Greek situation on Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Not once in the debates at Lake Success did the United States delegation even hint that the internal situation had any bearing on the guerrilla warfare. Did Washington really expect the Russians to accept the crudely one-sided American resolution which gave the Greek government a 99 44/100 per cent clean bill of health?

But the delegation of the Soviet Union is not any less dishonest when it denies that the Greek guerrillas are getting any assistance from north of the border.

AT THE moment Washington is acting more adeptly in this bit of rotten power politics. Washington has Moscow in a corner and is pressing in. The establishment by the Greek guerrillas of a military government "preliminary to the formation of a Provisional Government" is obviously a Russian move.

The new Greek guerrillas, whose bands sprouted at first in retaliation against the terrorist attacks of monarchist bands encouraged and condoned by Constantin Tsaldaris's royalist government, had originally no thought of seizing power. They knew the odds against them were too great. They felt that they could force the fall of the royalist-fascist government and the induction of one which would offer them some measure of safety and a start toward the new life they had thought they were fighting for during the German occupation. They had almost succeeded in this purpose last spring when the United States stepped in.

The fact that the Greek guerrillas announced a military regime rather than the long-threatened Provisional Government, which would have been just as easy to set up, reveals a nervous but wily Moscow tactic. The military regime serves as a trial balloon. It tests the Americans and it feels out the sentiments of the Greek people.

It also serves as a bone which may later be thrown to the wolves. Abandonment of the plan for a provisional government and dissolution of the military regime may be Russian "concessions" later on. The Greek guerrillas will be left holding the bag, reduced to bitter, endless fighting, without a voice or a hand raised in their support.

Undoubtedly, this is to be the "satisfactory conclusion" of the Greek case which Acting Secretary Lovett referred to on the day after the Russian veto. Those who thought that when the United States took over British commitments in the Near East a more liberal policy would be introduced are now sadder, if not wiser. Had we tossed out the racketeers and monarchist murderers in Athens we might have alleviated the guerrilla problem. Had we insisted on a liberal government which would have offered a real amnesty and brought the army, gendarmerie, and state machinery under non-partisan direction, and had we insisted on various economic reforms, we would have obviated the immediate threat of communism in Greece and eradicated the "danger from the north."

But then if we had done that, what excuse would we have had to shake our fists under Russia's nose, not to speak of its satellites's noses? What excuse would there have been for our growing military missions and our omnipresent flotillas?

Washington is playing an acute game from its own point of view. If through the United Nations—which we want to patrol the frontier but which we do not want to "interfere" with our plans for Greece—we could get a permanent border commission, the Greek army could, we think, clean up the guerrillas once and for all, and there would be no more nonsense about a leftist movement in Greece.

If we can't get a permanent border commission, we can say to the world, "See? We tried. Now we have to send American troops to Greece to close that troublesome border." And when we send American troops to patrol our new frontier, as so many people in Washington are now anxious to do, we shall be playing our last card. American soldiers will be killed by Greek guerrillas, by the Yugoslavs, the Bulgars, and the Albanians. Then we start playing for keeps.

There is, of course, the possibility that the Russians will "come to their senses" and call off their satellites just before it is too late. In which case we shall have demonstrated to the world the superiority of our power over the Soviet Union's. And in any case we shall have made Greece safe for democracy, monarchy, and capitalism.

TO GET back to Lake Success. Would the American delegation to the United Nations and the other members of the Security Council who support it have understood the implication of the Greek government's broadcast last Saturday if they had heard it? It said:

> The Greek situation has now entered the road of final solution, and everything suggests that Greece's demands will be met, which will mean not only that morality and justice will have prevailed but that the end of the disturbances in the Balkans will have been reached.
>
> Because it is only when Greece is granted borders which are recognized historically and internationally that the Bulgarian Komitadjis, Yugoslav mercenaries, and Albanian thieves will lose all hope of success and cease the invasions which bring constant disturbances to the Balkan Peninsula.
>
> The Greek people are now beginning to believe that

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their rights will be recognized and that the hour is at hand when the Allies will fulfil their obligations toward Greece.

This is how the present Greek government interprets the Truman Doctrine. To the New York *Times* the Soviet Union's veto of the American resolution may mean that a "member power deliberately blocked the operation of the peace-making machinery"; to the present Greek government it means that heady dreams of a Byzantine "Greater Greece" are about to be realized.

Father Tompkins of Cape Breton

BY LEO LANIA

There are four sorts of men:
He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool—shun him.
He who knows not and knows that he knows not is a child—teach him.
He who knows and knows not that he knows is asleep—wake him.
He who knows and knows that he knows is wise—follow him!

Sidney, Nova Scotia

THE little slim man, neatly dressed in a black suit with the turned white collar of a priest, is more than seventy-five years old, but he stepped briskly up on a chair in order to read these lines to me, cut in a board above the door of his study. He has the voice and accurate movements of a young man. You don't notice the deep wrinkles in his pale, clean-shaven face, but you cannot help noticing his eyes—sharp, eager, very intense, with the searching look of a hunter or fisherman. He smiles often, and then you see a little golden flame deep in his eyes, and you feel as if you had known him all your life. A man of energy and unusual will-power, and at the same time a dreamer, a poet.

That is Father Tompkins—teacher, former vice-president of St. Francis Xavier University, one of the leading figures in Canada's cooperative movement, the prophet and guiding spirit of a program of adult education which is changing the social and economic life of Nova Scotia. His name is known far beyond the borders of Canada. Some time ago Harvard bestowed an honorary degree upon him; famous universities have made him tempting offers. Father Tompkins, however, prefers to remain what he has been all his life—a village priest, the friend of the fishermen, miners, and farmers on Cape Breton Island.

Reserve is the name of the village halfway between Sidney and Glace Bay where Father Tompkins lives and works. Most of the 5,000 inhabitants are coal miners. Some of the mines in which they work are very deep and stretch out under the sea for several miles. Reserve has a few rows of modest houses, a Catholic and a Protestant church, and next to Father Tompkins's house a big modern school building which would do honor to any city. The school, the "people's library," and the cooperative across the street are the three cornerstones of Father Tompkins's achievements and plans.

What distinguishes Tompkins from other leaders of the cooperative movement is his approach to the economic problems of modern society. He does not attempt merely to organize the people; he wants to educate them. He has never been primarily concerned with building cooperative enterprises but rather with building a movement. The credit unions which he helped form have not remained mere loan agencies but have been expanding their activities into the sphere of actual economic regeneration. The marketing organizations of the fishermen and farmers of Cape Breton Island have developed into cultural centers. The educational impulse is the nucleus of Tompkins's movement.

Nova Scotia is a shocking example of the failure of "rugged individualism" to bring economic and cultural progress. Here is a province whose resources should have guaranteed sound economic conditions and even prosperity. With rich coal deposits, good farmland, vast forests, and the finest fishing grounds in this hemisphere, Nova Scotia offers its people abundant opportunities. These people are, in the main, of rugged Scotch or English stock and hard workers. And yet until a few years ago they lived in abject poverty and backwardness. The story of what Father Tompkins has done has a lesson that is important to all of us.*

When he went into action—a little over twenty years ago—most of the fishermen of Nova Scotia were but share-croppers of the sea. The opportunities and the profits were for the middle man, the promoter, the representative of powerful trusts. The individual fisherman was always in debt and thus completely at the

LEO LANIA, writer and lecturer, is the author of "Today We Are Brothers."

*Bertram B. Fowler gives a dramatic account of Father Tompkins's work in "The Lord Helps Those—," published by Vanguard.

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mercy of the merchant, who could take his boat and gear if he refused to sell his catch at the merchant's price. The mortgaged farmer was in a similar plight.

It was in Little Dover, an island village of 300 fishermen, that Tompkins started. He had resigned from the vice-presidency of St. Francis Xavier University at Antigonish because he had come to the conclusion that the university served only a small group of intellectuals who after graduation were interested merely in getting well-paid jobs. Tompkins had other aims. He has expressed his philosophy in these words: "No man really achieves true greatness any other way than by getting it from the people. Get close to the people with the desire to work for them and with them and they'll make you great. The people make giants."

The people of Little Dover had not even horses, to say nothing of cars, when Tompkins moved there; no roads connected the village with the mainland. There was one teacher; no newspaper reached the community; most people were illiterate. Little Dover was the laboratory of Father Tompkins's ideas; it became the cradle of his movement.

He did not start by telling the fishermen what they ought to do. He told them that they must discover for themselves the root of their troubles. He preached not political action but education. He taught the basic facts of economics and social science. His first victory was a small canning factory which the fishermen built with their own labor, hauling the logs from the woods by hand. Money was spent only for rails and hardware. They raised it by contributing pennies and nickels from their meager earnings. Tompkins lent $300, without interest, and another man $700, for the purchase of canning machinery.

At the end of the first season the fishermen paid back this $1,000. The first cooperative was established. Others followed.

In the ensuing years, as the movement grew, Father Tompkins fought with all his energy for one principle: the members of the different cooperatives must think, plan, work for themselves. They, not the officers, he insisted, were to run the organizations. He wanted people to understand that every attempt to increase their income must be at the same time an attempt to raise the social and cultural level of the whole community.

Whenever a fishermen, farmer, or merchant receives a loan from the credit union, it is given him not only to keep him out of the clutches of a money-shark; it is the beginning of close economic cooperation between the credit union and the individual. The credit union effectively plays the part of a local banking institution, advising and helping each member; all the other members participate in the experience of each.

Father Tompkins's educational program follows the general pattern of the Danish folk-school movement. Some of its features recall the educational projects of the Austrian Social Democrats, the pre-Dollfuss *Volkshochschulen* and *Volksbildungsvereinen*. The "Study Clubs" are his own idea. Education is spread not through mass organizations but through small groups linked together in true community spirit.

"The children teach their parents," Father Tompkins said when he proudly showed me the children's library. It is a large and at the same time very intimate room, modern in the best sense of the word, decorated with dolls and pictures, flowers and funny animals in gay and charming colors. In addition to the usual books and picture magazines for small children one finds here hundreds of the best textbooks for older ones. Mothers and fathers drop in regularly, and once a week Father Tompkins or one of the teachers gives a lecture; two days later the audience meets again for a discussion.

Father Tompkins spoke with high admiration of many miners who, though almost broken by hard work, have become enthusiastic book lovers. "There is one miner, father of nine children. A few years ago he came for the first time. He asked for 'something light.' To read a page of a children's book was a real effort for him. Today he reads the most difficult books in my library, mostly social and philosophical works. There is a woman in our little town, a simple housewife. She has read all the poetry books we have, all of them, moderns as well as classic."

Father Tompkins took a small book from the shelves. "This is one of our most requested books," he said. I read its title: "The Barefoot Abe." It was a pictorial story of Abraham Lincoln. "It gives them so much courage and hope," he said.

Later, in his study, Father Tompkins told me of his future plans, of the "rotating libraries" which he wants to expand so that he can send books into every little port of Novia Scotia. An auditorium with a stage for theatrical performances and concerts is now under construction.

On his desk lay a book, "one of the few really great books of our time," Father Tompkins called it. It was David Lilienthal's story of the TVA. Every page of the book was covered with his annotations. "This is the way to combat communism," he continued. "You cannot fight it by force, only by eliminating the causes that breed it—poverty and social injustice."

In his modest way Father Tompkins and his friends have done more to make the common people understand the meaning of democracy than most of our labor leaders and propagandists with their million-dollar funds and mass organizations. Yet I doubt whether many Americans would think it worth their while to look into Father Tompkins's work. After all, Nova Scotia is only a province of Canada and Tompkins only a poor village priest.

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Del Vayo—Socialist House Divided

Paris, August 19

AFTER an absence of six months, my first impression of France was not unfavorable. The quality of the bread has deteriorated owing to the wheat shortage, and prices have risen still higher, but the shops are filled with all sorts of consumers' goods. The precautions I took on previous visits to bring along an ample supply of personal articles are no longer necessary. French production is climbing steadily despite recent strikes and the lack of coal. Even in these abnormally hot August days, when every Frenchman who can manage it has fled the capital, the streets and restaurants are crowded with English visitors who have crossed the Channel to recapture for a brief moment the joy of living. Paris still smiles while a cloud of anxieties and privations casts a lengthening shadow across the British Isles.

I reached France the day after the Thirty-ninth Congress of the French Socialist Party opened in Lyons. The congress was, in a sense, a microcosm of France's political situation, and thus I was able in a few days to bring myself up to date on the crisis now facing the country. Lyons is an important industrial city with a strong, unbroken Socialist tradition that dates back to the emergence of the French proletarian movement. The choice of Lyons as a meeting place and of the ultra-leftist Federation of the Rhône as the committee on arrangements was apparently dictated by the desire of the party leaders to show that although the Socialists have broken with the Communists and chosen the M. R. P. and Herriot's Radicals as their collaborators in the government, they have not become a conservative force. Actually, the left tendency carried the Congress, though by a narrow margin of 2,443 votes to 2,002. However, simply to record this fact without analyzing its significance in the light of the whole debate would give only a half-true picture.

The main problem before the Congress was this: should the Socialists, as members of the government, assume responsibility for a policy which contravenes the principles of their party? Specifically, must they bear the consequences for a policy of limiting wage increases, continuing old-time colonialism, and maintaining free enterprise when the Socialist program advocates defense of the workers' interests, active intervention of the state in the economic life of the country, and a colonial policy compatible with the humanitarian and internationalist concepts of socialism? Should they say to Premier Ramadier, "Follow any policy that will keep the Socialists in power," or "Support a Socialist policy even if it results in your leaving the government"? The Congress chose the second course. It voted to requisition wheat and even, if necessary, livestock; to control the market at every level; to initiate a sweeping series of "public-safety measures" in the economic field. In short, the Socialists voted for a *renforcement du dirigisme*—for increased state controls.

It was not only the close vote by which the left wing, headed by Guy Mollet, won over the "moderates," but the debate itself that revealed the extent of the ideological divisions in the party. Six different drafts of a party program, not including the letter Léon Blum addressed to the parliamentary group, were submitted to the delegates. Of these texts it is noteworthy that only one, prepared by "Bataille Socialiste," a minority faction of which Marcel Fourrier and Bloncourt are the best-known members, stressed the urgent necessity for unity of action of the working class. The others, including that of the Mollet group, were markedly anti-Communist. This trend can be explained in several ways —certainly the Marshall plan and the bloc politics of the West have had an influence—but the most important factor is undoubtedly the peculiar and extremely difficult situation in which the French Socialist Party finds itself today.

Though the voting strength of the Socialists has dropped in the past two years, their importance as a government party has been mounting. Despite its reverses at the last elections, the party saw itself accorded the key post of President of the Republic and chosen to head the two Cabinets formed since Auriol entered the Elysées. Thus the Socialists have taken over the role held before the war by the Radical Socialists, the most progressive element of the French bourgeoisie until Daladier passed to the side of reaction and tarred them with the brush of Munich.

In the present circumstances it is hard for the Socialists to square their importance as a government party with their aspiration to speak for the working class. This accounts for the uneasiness reflected by the majority of the delegates to the Congress. The main task at Lyons was to reconcile the irreconcilable. This miracle was not achieved; neither of the almost evenly matched opposing groups would budge an inch from the position it had taken at the outset of the convention. Obviously the only alternative was to reach a decision by majority vote; the majority accepted the principle that even defense of the Republic does not justify the participation of Socialists in a government whose policy is not theirs. The party's position on this issue has now emerged very clearly: the party has its program. If the other political parties agree to that program, Socialists may assume the direction of a coalition government. But they cannot accept leadership only to carry out the policy of the M. R. P. or the Radical Socialists.

This was the most important decision reached at the Lyons congress—one which may bring about an early ministerial crisis. For the victorious left wing is determined that Ramadier or any later Socialist Premier must govern as a Socialist or resign. However, once the Parliament has settled the question of the Algerian statute, it will adjourn until after the October municipal election. This interval will give Ramadier time to reconsider his views and try to repair his position in his own party.

Mr. del Vayo has just arrived in Paris; during the coming months he will send regular reports on European political developments.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Co-ops on the March

THE COOPERATIVE CHALLENGE. By Bertram B. Fowler. Little, Brown and Company. $2.75.

ALTHOUGH consumer cooperation is now firmly established in this country and has begun to play an important part in economic life, there is still widespread ignorance about its achievements and the principles on which it operates. This is a book which will help to dispel that ignorance. It is an up-to-date report on the movement, stressing its extraordinary growth in the past decade.

Consumer cooperation is an import from Europe and for a long time was promoted mainly by foreign-language groups. Then it became a regional movement among the farmers of the Middle West. Now it is developing rapidly in urban as well as rural districts and can claim to be truly national. It has ceased to be an affair of dingy stores in back streets; today the Co-op sign is to be found on the fronts of gleaming super-markets on an increasing number of main thoroughfares. Moreover, the cooperatives have begun to move into production in a big way. The most dramatic example, described in detail in this book, is the development of an integrated oil industry covering every step from oil well to filling station. Very important service businesses, such as insurance, have also been built up by cooperatives, and recent experiments in housing and health centers hold great promise for the future.

As a useful compendium of facts on all such matters, this book can be thoroughly recommended except for the strange omission of an index. On questions of theory, however, I find myself rather disturbed by Mr. Fowler's doctrinaire approach. The trouble is that he treats the "Rochdale principles," established by the English pioneers of consumer cooperation, not as a set of time-tested, common-sense rules for cooperative enterprise but as fundamental economic dogmas. Mr. Fowler asserts vehemently that consumer cooperation is the only route by which democracy can escape from the toils of capitalist monopoly on the one hand and the totalitarian socialist state on the other. For he follows the now standard practice of capitalist champions of equating socialism and totalitarianism and assumes, practically without argument, that democratic socialism is a contradiction in terms.

In his chapter on cooperatives in the Canadian prairie provinces Mr. Fowler makes a gratuitous and offensive attack on the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation—the C. C. F. He scolds the voters of Saskatchewan, who at the last provincial election gave the C. C. F. a large majority, for supporting a party which appeared liberal but actually represented "a political thesis that diametrically opposed the democratic philosophy of consumer cooperation." Although the present Saskatchewan government has given every support and encouragement to the cooperatives, he hints darkly that its ultimate purpose is to absorb them in the state apparatus. He also suggests, on the basis of what evidence heaven alone knows, that the British Labor government may "seize upon the co-ops as tools to bring into being the complete socialization of all industry."

Mr. Fowler is led into stupidities of this kind by doctrinaire fears of any form of state economic enterprise. Yet strangely enough he devotes a chapter to hailing the achievements of cooperatives in opposing the power monopoly in the Northwest—achievements that would not have been possible without the New Deal's great Bonneville project. This, of course, is but one example of complementary activity by the state and cooperatives in the United States and other countries. In the mixed economy toward which the British Labor Party, the C. C. F., and democratic Socialist organizations in many other lands are moving there will be abundant opportunities for cooperative enterprise. It is unfortunate, therefore, that writers like Mr. Fowler, and his obvious mentor, the veteran Dr. Warbasse, should attempt to build an impassable barrier between Socialists and cooperators. Such tactics can only play into the hands of the common enemy—monopoly capitalism. KEITH HUTCHISON

A Big Subject

DIRTY EDDIE. By Ludwig Bemelmans. The Viking Press. $2.75.

LUDWIG BEMELMANS has two distinct literary talents—a mildly inventive whimsy and a gift for describing food. The sensuous representation of the tastes and textures of food is, I venture to guess, one of the few subjects he tackles with genuine enthusiasm; in any case, it is the only phase of his work for which I feel genuine enthusiasm. One has to look elsewhere for the other satisfactions usually expected from novels, but I'll take my literary meals with Bemelmans.

Long years of writing neat, whimsical, ironic, nostalgic pieces have blunted Bemelmans's claws. Having, for so long, so charmingly blended Viennese *Gemütlichkeit* and *New Yorkerish* modulation into a constant awareness of the exigencies of good taste, he is faintly superior to anger, invective, or bitterness. Bemelmans has titillated his audience by convincing them of his and their superiority to the materials he has used; in that mild snobbishness is the core of his success at being amusing. Which may do for Bemelmans's little world, but does not do for a satiric novel about Hollywood.

Satire must grow from hatred or contempt. If successful, it transforms these rough emotions into rapier thrusts, *but the emotion must be there.* It is precisely the absence of this emotion which makes "Dirty Eddie" a failure. There are amusing bits in which whimsy hops, flutters, and perches on your nose. But the book is torn apart by an internal conflict of polar motivations: Bemelmans is not really sure how he feels about Hollywood; he is not sure whether he should hate and despise it, or poke fun at it in a mild and charming way.

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"Dirty Eddie" therefore falls into all the traps which Hollywood, in its knowing calculations, sets for people like Bemelmans. There is a pattern of satire which is ready-made—it has even been given Hollywood's stamp of approval—and is not really satire at all. And like a baby going for the bottle, Bemelmans has slid into this pattern: the fabulous, malaprop Jewish producer with girls tumbling over him, the slightly mad Russian director, the wisely cynical French writer, the innocent, hard-boiled American beauty. Where, if not in Hollywood, have we seen all this before?

Since Bemelmans does not take himself seriously as a writer, he is unable to take his subject seriously. In his attempt to confine himself to a whimsy that does not disturb anyone, he corsets his personality by remaining curiously passive toward the novel; he does not bear down; it is all too easy for him. I do not intend to make a plea for solemnity, but I do think that true satire can only spring from highly serious perception and *that* Bemelmans does not have. His characters, therefore, seem, for all their brittle distinctiveness, merely odd functions of his whimsy. Though he himself is detached, he is not willing to grant them an objective development of their own. And so we end with a disjointed novel and some nicely observant and well-molded prose, but with no motivating intellectual commitment or passion, without which a satiric novel, especially one on Hollywood, cannot be written. Bemelmans simply is not equal to his subject. As other and better writers have discovered, Hollywood is a big subject.

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The Rural Problem

THE AMERICAN FARMER. By Lee Fryer. Harper and Brothers. $3.

IS THERE a necessary correlation between progress in technique and progress in civilization? Americans had better come to grips with the question in relation to our modern rural society and establish a definite public policy in this field before it is too late. For the machine age is working a swifter change among our farm people than is generally realized.

This is the argument in Lee Fryer's forthright and really challenging book. Mr. Fryer knows at first hand that farming is moving in the direction of machine culture and industrial techniques, and he does not see this development as necessarily evil because it must replace the older, traditional ways of agriculture. He knows that we must have a more efficient system of food production, and he is very much concerned with the nature of this new efficiency.

Will increased production be gained at the expense of the rural people in the new agriculture? Will the new pattern of farming require a large force of wage labor hired on an impersonal basis? Will this reduce the chances of survival of large numbers of family farmers, driving them into the rural wage force, into the cities, or on to the relief rolls? Mr. Fryer is above all concerned with the social ends of the new technology on the land and the capitalist industrialism which goes with it. And his answer to the question whether or not technical progress will bring the good life in its train is that it will not unless the problem is widely understood and handled by means of intelligent planning.

The purpose of Mr. Fryer's book is to create awareness of the problem and suggest ways of meeting it. It makes a ringing demand for action on the part of the rural people themselves, as well as for a national plan for rural reconstruction. It is couched in vigorous language, and it is full of hard sense and statistical proof. Moreover, one feels upon reading it that this story and these conclusions have come out of a lifetime of first-hand experience. The author has worked with the Farm Security Administration on such varied problems as farm-land colonization, Western-land irrigation policy, and rural housing. His cooperative experience has been wide in his own state of Oregon, and he has learned much about the national problem of farm people through administrative work with the National Farmers' Union.

"The American Farmer" is a practical book with practical suggestions based upon accumulated data. It shows the present status of working farmers—their houses, their health, their incomes—and it appraises their chances of survival. It goes directly to the heart of the rural problem in the land, debt, and tenure situation, and comes up with the basic assumption that it is absolutely necessary for society "to control the ownership and distribution of farm land in accordance with a sound policy of employment and income." And it demonstrates with remarkable clarity that in a technological society in which all other groups are organized farm people must develop their own efficiency and must operate through organizations, both local and national, for their economic and social security. The author does not belittle the place of the na-

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tional government in the reconstruction of rural life, but adopting the principle of grass-roots administration of federal functions, he stresses the importance of local action. The farming people of America must in the long run work out their own economic and social adjustments under the legal protection of government and thus lay the basis for the reconstruction of rural life in the United States.

We have had farm-relief programs. We have had conservation programs and programs for improving farm credit, not to speak of a vast program for scientific training and education. But we are today at a turning point in rural life, and our programs of the past will not be adequate for the future. They will help some of the people involved but not all. This is their essential weakness. "We need new principles and new practical policies which will work for people's welfare," says Mr. Fryer. We need not permit the industrial age to leave a trail of waste upon the land as it has within the cities. To achieve a greater production it is not necessary to destroy our soils and ravage our people. "Only by decentralizing and limiting the concentrated power of corporations, defending the security of individual families, raising the income of vast numbers of people, and enlarging their opportunities for productive employment, can the nation meet its crisis of the next decade. Unless action is taken along these lines, both the cities and the countryside are headed for prolonged depression and then disaster." Obviously we need to lift our sights in handling the rural situation. And "The American Farmer" does much to point the way.

P. ALSTON WARING

Shop Talk

OFF BROADWAY: ESSAYS ABOUT THE THEATER. By Maxwell Anderson. William Sloane Associates. $2.50.

VERY few dramatic writers have had as much drama in their careers as has Maxwell Anderson. He has written a number of sensational successes and an even larger number of sensational failures. On occasion he has been praised as highly as any contemporary playwright and on others has been the recipient of abuse more contemptuous than what any except a very few have ever been called to endure with patience. Taking the theater and himself with full seriousness, he has, nevertheless, written both well enough and badly enough to come somewhere near deserving both the good and the bad things which have been said about him; and he knows his trade very well indeed at the same time that he is sincerely determined to make it a good deal more than merely a trade. Moreover, as this exceedingly slim volume of very brief essays collected from here and there will serve to demonstrate, he can express himself in expository prose more sensibly, simply, and clearly than most playwrights can. Even among the ten little pieces there is a good deal of difference in weight and importance, but they are all interesting as the opinions of a man who is obviously entitled to opinions on their subjects. The one on "the critics" is as unsatisfactory as attempts at retaliation usually are. On the other hand, the little essay The Essence of Tragedy is one of the very few examples of the possibility of saying anything fresh on that subject.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Quest

THE WANDERER (LE GRAND MEAULNES). By Henri Alain-Fournier. Translated by Françoise Delisle. New Directions. $1.50.

MEAULNES, having lost his way after a wrong turning in the desolate winter countryside of the Sologne, comes upon a mysterious estate where a group of children are preparing a fête and fantastic masquerade for the wedding which is to take place the next day. The wedding has to be called off, for the bridegroom fails to appear, but Meaulnes has seen and has talked to a young girl, Yvonne de Galais. In the dark before dawn he sleeps while a peasant's cart takes him back to his village. He and his young friend Seurel attempt for years to find their way back to the mysterious manor. And it is Seurel one day who, no longer an adolescent, and while only half-listening to the talk of some of his companions about an old run-down manor house, recognizes it at once and with a startling lack of surprise, as though he had really always known. Meaulnes has last been heard of in Paris, and Seurel at once sets out to find him.

This attempt at a résumé of "Le Grand Meaulnes" would be enough to keep anyone from reading the novel. It resembles too nearly the scenario of one of Maeterlinck's early plays or, for that matter, a Hollywood film. It is impossible to make a précis of it—a great many people have tried—without writing something as long as the book itself. The latest exhaustive study of it was published in 1944 by Alfred

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Léonard. It is a monumental work, perfectly up to date, even utilizing De Rougemont's theory about the Cathars. It is all true, too. A sagacious young French critic, a few months ago, having been asked to consider an even more recent book about "Meaulnes" made the point I am trying to make here: that there isn't much to say, that the extraordinary effect is all to be found intrinsic in the novel, and that to try to render it extrinsic by critical writing only annoys the sort of reader who persists, in a crazy way, in believing that he wrote the novel himself. However, if you believe that reading Max Brod on Kafka helps you to experience "The Castle," nothing of what I have said here has much meaning. All I ask is that you make a mere postscript of Havelock Ellis's introduction, which, though competent, should have been buried with the old beard himself. "We may best approach 'Le Grand Meaulnes,' " he says, "by knowing something of the man who stands behind it." On the contrary, there never existed a book so self-contained.

French poetry can't be translated, but French prose can when someone has the inestimable talent of Françoise Delisle; you can't improve on perfection, and New Directions deserves praise for having reprinted from Houghton Mifflin's 1928 plates. But if there had to be an introduction, Edmund Wilson should have been asked to do it. He seems to me about the only one to convince you that "Le Grand Meaulnes" is unique and universal, like watching your own skin getting wrinkled over the years; the only man to make you tie up the experience of reading "Meaulnes" with that of being dropped, while stooping down to tie your shoelaces in the morning, among the fragments of last night's dream, while in self-defense you relate them even as they fade away with the pattern of the carpet under your eyes.

> And without hurrying he went on his way. At the corner of the wood, in between two white posts, appeared a drive which Meaulnes entered. He walked up a few yards and stopped, startled, disturbed by inexplicable feelings. He walked with the same fatigue, the icy wind cut his lips and took his breath away, and yet a strange contentment urged him on, a perfect and almost intoxicating peace, the assurance that his goal had been reached and that he had now nothing but happiness to expect. . . . "So much joy," he said to himself, "just because I am coming to this old dovecot full of owls and drafts."

This passage was certainly not chosen at random, but if you find "Meaulnes" "romantic," there is this to remind you of Zola or Céline: "The funeral is for midday. The doctor fears the rapid decomposition which sometimes follows on an embolism. That's why the face—as well as the whole body for that matter—is wrapped by absorbent cotton soaked in phenol."

The story of "Le Grand Meaulnes" is that of a quest. In Robert Graves's words: "There is one story and one story only." RENÉ BLANC-ROOS

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POETS AND PUNDITS. A Collection of Essays. By Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Yale University Press. $3.50.

THESE are fine essays. In Mr. Fausset's pages the reader will find more poets than pundits, and, of the latter, none, in the pejorative sense of the word. Facing, humbly, the reviewer's first duty—"to act as a reliable mediator between an author and the public and to serve both as sensitively as he can"—Mr. Fausset proves himself sensitive to many kinds of sensitivity, not merely susceptible to his own; he enters into natures as various as those of Whitman and Rilke, Tolstoy and Tennyson, Dorothy Wordsworth and Donne, the Augustans and Edmund Blunden, Hopkins, and De la Mare. Moreover, he is acutely aware of the dilemmas, doubts, and dangers that assail the artist, or any man in our own time who is concerned with the values of the spirit. This awareness, and the sharing of this concern, unite these essays in a common theme and fully justify the author's hope that the theme gives "unity to the book's diversity and a significance beyond that of a mere collection of literary essays." To all but the arrant, or craven, materialist Mr. Fausset's book will afford pleasure, satisfaction, and cause for rejoicing—a heartening collection.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

That Atomic War

WORLD AFLAME. By Leonard Engel and Emanuel S. Piller. The Dial Press. $2.

THIS book is in a good cause. The authors are describing the state of the world in 1955. From 1950 to 1955 war had been in full swing between (can you guess?) the United States and Soviet Russia. The United States, in 1955, was planning for another five years of all-out war. Up to that time the give and take had been more or

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less equal. One hundred of our leading cities had been razed. Some 30,000,000 of our population had been killed, an equal number wounded, and so on. The Russian losses were proportionately of about the same order. The end was nowhere in sight. In fact, contrary to popular notions, this "Atomic War" looked as if it were going to outlast World Wars I and II.

This book deserves wide distribution, if only to remind us of what may be in store for us and for the world.

I suggest a companion volume, of equal if not greater importance—a volume also dealing with the period of 1950-55, but with a different theme: statesmen proved far-sighted enough to prevent war between the two nations, and intelligent enough to provide for the "common man." And now let's look at the world of 1955.

BENJAMIN HARROW

Films

JAMES AGEE

A CHECKLIST on some new and recent movies:

"Life with Father." Rich, careful, rather heavily proficient. Fun, I suppose; but I can't really enjoy laughing at tyrants, least of all at tyrants who are forgiven because of their innocence. William Powell acts, rather than is, Father rather well, but it's strictly an impersonation. Irene Dunne is painfully miscast as Mother; she would probably keep her tongue in her cheek uttering the Seven Last Words.

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." By no means what it might have been if it had used what James Thurber's story offered it, but quite an entertaining movie. I am getting a little wan about Danny Kaye's tonsil-juggling numbers, but there are good bits of henpecking and office life, and at moments during the daydreams Kaye is wonderful. He is so good at his best that it is hard to forgive—or even believe—all that he mishandles. I am sorry that the dreams are set and dressed as fantastic musical-comedy numbers; they would have been much funnier if Mitty had dictated every square inch of his surroundings. The Goldwyn-Thurber correspondence in a recent issue of *Life*, by the way, makes very interesting reading.

"Down to Earth." And so far as I'm concerned, six feet under it. Mr. Jordan, dry-ice mist, and heaven too.

A Broadway musical called "Swinging the Muses." Terpsichore (Rita Hayworth) intervening to turn this rotten piece of commercial entertainment into still worse high art. There are, however, some prettier than average tunes, and a few glimpses of Miss Hayworth are also prettier than average.

"Black Narcissus." Several nuns get upset by the strange atmosphere of, and surrounding, their new convent, which was formerly a Himalayan harem. (Quite an idea for a musical, that. Take it away, Rita.) One (well played by Kathleen Byron) falls for a local Englishman (David Farrar) and fails to renew her vows. The head nun (Deborah Kerr) just makes Sisterly sheeps' eyes at him as he lunges around the sanctuary in his shorts he is not, one gathers, a Believer). There is also a local Holy Man, staring at a peak, and a great deal of talk about the wind and the strangeness of it all. After a while the Sisters give it up as a bad job. It is all intended to be very "psychological," "atmospheric," "rueful," and "worldly-wise." I suspect that the worst faults lie in Rumer Godden's original novel; that Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger were badly mistaken in trying to make a movie of it at all. There is some unusually good color photography, and as movie making some of it is intelligent and powerful. But the pervasive attitude in and toward the picture makes it as a whole tedious and vulgar. P. S.: Barring perhaps one in any hundred who willingly practice it, I think celibacy is of itself faintly obscene; so I admire still less the dramatic exploitation of celibacy as an opportunity for titillation in the best of taste.

"Frieda." Are *all* Germans Guilty? This English film spends a long time

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earnestly telling you that some aren't, entirely, and some are, and that time heals, respectively, all wounds and none. It appears that the only thing open to a German who wants really to convince one of a willingness to be reeducated is a sincere attempt at suicide. Mai Zetterling, who was very good in the Swedish film "Torment," is still pretty good in this, but the face and the talent are freezing; unless she is smart and careful, Hollywood will finish her, directly or indirectly. David Farrar, who sets the nuns a-flutter in "Black Narcissus," is also in this one. He might easily become a matinee idol, and he might possibly become something better than that.

"The Long Night." A long, loud, ambitious film, Anatole Litvak's first since the war, about a simple man (Henry Fonda) who is driven to murder by the calculated confusions of a very corrupt man (Vincent Price). It would be interesting to see it on a double bill with its original version, the French "Daybreak." Both films obviously rate themselves as tragedies; both are merely intelligent trash. But the old one is much more discreet with its self-pity and much more sharply edged. The new one depends too heavily on crowd-commotion; noise (there are gruesome distortions of the slow movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony); huge, lugubrious close-ups of Fonda looking adenoidal; and class-angling. It is, however, much better than the run of contemporary movies.

"Thunderbolts." Made by William Wyler during the war too late for release released now as a recruiting incentive. A record of the bombing and strafing operation which cut off the Germans in Italy from their supplies. A good many incredibly fine air shots, well organized; by a long shot, the best of the movies reviewed above.

Some older movies that are worth seeing, or mentioning anyhow:

"The Macomber Affair." Best movie job on Hemingway, to date. I persist in believing that Zoltan Korda is one of the best directors in Hollywood. "The Woman on the Beach." An exceptionally evocative melodrama, directed by Jean Renoir. "Copacabaña." Groucho Marx with a new mustache and a modified style. "The Red House." Back-country melodrama well written and directed by Delmer Daves, who makes good use of his location and of some adolescents. "Torment." The first half is a fine, ardent movie about a schoolboy, a deranged teacher, and a terrified working girl; thereafter it fritters out into pretty good horror melodrama and pale conclusions. "Miracle on 34th Street." Santa Claus (well played by Edmund Gwenn) comes to Herald Square and wraps up the millennium in one neat package. Clever, and pleased with itself, and liked by practically everybody; but since I have always despised the maxim "Honesty is the best policy," I enjoy even less a statement of the profits accruing through faith, loving kindness, etc. I expect next a "witty, tender little fantasy" presenting the Son of God (Sonny Tufts) as God's Customers' Man.

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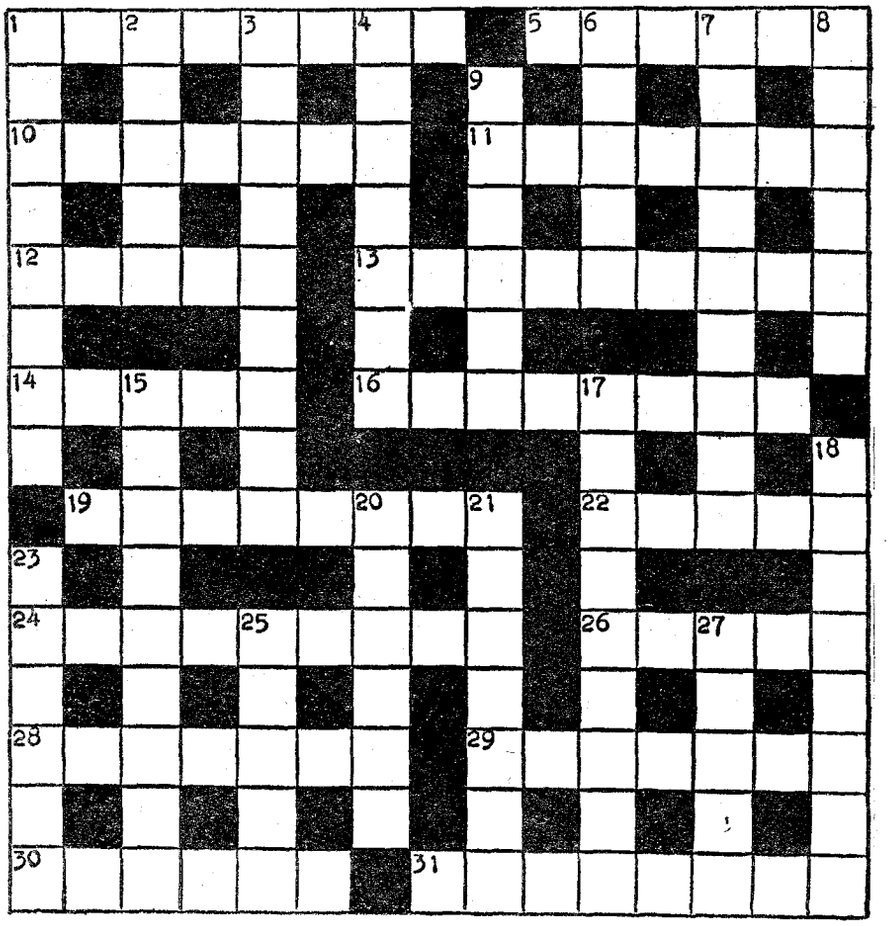
Music

B. H. HAGGIN

MOSES SMITH'S "Koussevitzky" (Allen, Towne, and Heath, $4) is the biography that Koussevitzky tried to suppress. On the other hand the Harvard University Press announcement of Dr. Hugo Leichtentritt's "Serge Koussevitzky, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the New American Music" ($3) informed me that when the book was being considered Koussevitzky wrote: "I personally believe that Dr. Leichtentritt is one of the few outstanding musicologists of our day, and his book, based on long experience and direct contact with the musical life of this country, will prove of great interest. . . . It would give me much pleasure to see it published by you."

Actually the "long experience and direct contact with the musical life of this country" is that of a German who came here after 1933, and whose knowledge and opinions of much of the music played by Koussevitzky in his earlier years and by the Boston Symphony even before that—and also of what other orchestras and conductors had done for American composers—are only such as could be acquired from the volumes of Boston Symphony program-notes and press-clippings. Furthermore, the scholarship of this "outstanding musicologist" is as little worthy of respect in this book as it was in his article on criticism in the Harvard Dictionary of Music: there, for example, he had newspaper criticism of music beginning with Hanslick, here he has "modern conducting . . . stemming from Wagner"—omitting in each case the work of Berlioz. Moreover, he finds it as easy to invent whatever he needs for his purpose as some of his fellow-scholars do: for example—to show how logical the engagement of Koussevitzky was—the statements that "after the death of Nikisch he had a greater international prestige than any other contemporary conductor," that "the Great War had finished the era of German predominance in the best American orchestras," and that the eminent German conductors had no desire to come here—the truth being that less had been heard here of Koussevitzky than of Furtwängler and Bruno Walter (to say nothing of Toscanini), and that not only were Walter brought over by the New York Symphony in 1923 and Furtwängler by the New York Philharmonic

CROSSWORD PUZZLE No. 226 By MR. X.



[SPECIAL NOTICE! This is the fourth of six puzzles constructed by Mr. X in competition with Mr. Y. At the end of the competition, *The Nation's* regular crossword puzzle man will be selected on the basis of letters sent in by puzzle-solving readers.]

ACROSS

1 Once loss is suffered, comforts are all awry
5 Mater's a regular babbling brook
10 According to the mode, style should conceal garishness
11 Electric fans
12 Blood-and-sandlot
13 Sauce for the goose
14 Cross-examine at the bar
16 Night lights
19 Despise nothing when interpreting special events
22 The Cork road to Dublin
24 A Latin manual
26 It's apparent the voter is confused
28 Keep cool first and last if you wish to govern
29 This makes a gun so much neater
30 Esthete set out tea to boil
31 "In Old --------," by Norman Douglas

DOWN

1 Map strategy to gain the bivouac
2 Gee! In the nude, but it has a light touch
3 The cob steals over the hurdles
4 Why Elain's so delightful
6 Making a strait flush
7 Queer how Circe backed up about a penny
8 Merit's in the man
9 Rope washer
15 Some effrontery is to be expected from an imp and a dunce
17 Ha, Marconi never dreamed they'd put this instrument on the radio!
18 Gave Thais rye and provoked her frenzy
20 Oiled the sea to make it gentle
21 Arm us at the Netherlands East Indies
23 Civets disappear when he puts out the cats
25 Charm of the first spring moon
27 Egregious *agent provocateur* gets off with I. O. U.'s

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 225

ACROSS:—1 LOBSTER; 5 MEDDLER; 9 ROASTED; 10 NOVICES; 11 ELDER; 12 ARM; 13 LOUTS; 14 SERVANT; 16 MERGERS; 18 TEMBLOR; 21 CAPITAL; 24 ANNUL; 26 AIR; 27 STEIN; 28 AVERAGE; 29 ARTICLE; 30 LISPERS; 31 RANGERS.

DOWN:—1 LARGESS; 2 BOARDER; 3 TUTOR; 4 RADIANT; 5 MINIMUM; 6 DEVIL; 7 LECTURE; 8 RESISTS; 15 AWL; 17 RAP; 18 TRAVAIL; 19 MANNERS; 20 REAPERS; 21 CORSAIR; 22 TREACLE; 23 LENDERS; 25 LEASE; 27 SATAN.

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during Koussevitzky's first season, but Mengelberg was with the Philharmonic, Reiner with the Cincinnati Symphony, and Klemperer was brought over by the New York Symphony.

In addition, when Leichtentritt writes about the music he does know from performance or from the score, it is with the lack of critical discernment and aesthetic good sense that is characteristic of these scholars, and that produces passages like this one about Copland's "Billy the Kid": "A naive foreigner . . . might ask whether this is a typically American story, and what music has to do with it. Evidently Copland asked himself the same questions, and evidently he did find something typically American in this tale and something fit for musical treatment. As a musician, Copland is concerned with Americanism in its various phases, but also with the dignity of the art of music. Yet in this particular case, one may suspect that commercial reasons prompted him to neglect the dignity of music, as he is otherwise not a specialist in stories appealing to the instincts of the prize ring."

And about Koussevitzky himself as artist and educator, finally, Leichtentritt writes with the factual accuracy and critical judgment of a corporation publicity director writing about the talents and achievements of the corporation's president: in whatever Koussevitzky has done as a musician he has been unfailingly and brilliantly right, even where he has been found wrong, and for reasons and principles newly invented to meet the criticisms; in whatever he has said as an educator and propagandist in music he has been profound and prophetic.

Altogether the book is, in fact, what a corporation publicity director would turn out about the corporation and its president, dressed up in pretensions to scholarship. It is, then, a book one can understand a Koussevitzky getting pleasure from seeing published, but not a Harvard University Press publishing.

Smith's excellent book I will have to postpone to next week.

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